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Media Advisory

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Recipients of 2004 National Wetlands Awards Announced

Six wetlands educators, scientists, and conservationists were selected as recipients of the 2004 National Wetlands Awards for exemplary contributions in conserving or restoring the Nation's wetlands. They will be honored at a presentation on May 20th in the United States Senate Caucus Room in Washington, DC.

This year's awardees are: Peg Bostwick (Michigan), Jack Branning (Mississippi), Norman Brunswig (South Carolina), Francis Golet (Rhode Island), Sky Lewey (Texas) and Barbara Salzman (California).

The National Wetlands Awards Program celebrates individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary dedication, innovation or excellence in wetlands conservation. Their work covers programs or projects on the regional, state and local levels. "We are grateful for the exceptional efforts of these awardees. Their efforts to protect and preserve our nation's wetlands help sustain healthy aquatic habitats for diverse species of plants, fish and wildlife," said Major General Carl A. Strock, Director of Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "The well-being of natural communities is essential to the quality of our lives."

"These awardees, at the forefront of America's wetland protectors, provide a sense of confidence that we have the leadership, talent and commitment to achieve the challenging goals that we have set for the nation's wetlands," said Benjamin H. Grumbles, Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"The Forest Service is proud to support the National Wetland Awards program and to recognize these extraordinary individuals for their work in protecting and restoring our wetlands," Dale N. Bosworth, Chief of the USDA Forest Service, stated.

Program co-sponsors—the Environmental Law Institute, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—believe that recognizing these individuals for their efforts will help ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy high quality wetlands, biological diversity and clean water. "When wetlands disappear, essential habitats for hundreds of species of wildlife and plants also disappear," said Steve Williams, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "For people, wetland losses mean declines in water quality and increased flood risk."

"NOAA Fisheries congratulates this year's National Wetlands Awardees on their hard work and dedication in protecting and restoring our nation's wetlands," said Dr. Bill Hogarth, Assistant Administrator, NOAA Fisheries. "So many fish and shellfish depend on wetlands for habitat and cleaner water. The awardees' efforts are felt by many."

The 2004 Award recipients were chosen by a diverse selection committee comprised of national leaders in wetlands conservation, including Connie Cahanap (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), Albert Cerna (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service), Lauren Driscoll (Washington Department of Ecology), Arthur Feinstein (Golden Gate Audubon Society), Abby Friedman (National Association of Counties), Bill Haglan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Paul Scott Hausmann (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources), Graeme Lockaby (Auburn University), Moira McDonald (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation), Leah Miller (Izaak Walton League of America), Leopoldo Miranda (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Heidi Ricci (Massachusetts Audubon Society), Daniel Rosenberg (Natural Resources Defense Council), Karen Solari (USDA Forest Service), Susan-Marie Stedman (NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service), Bill Streever (BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc.), Katherine Trott (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), and Gene Whitaker (National Association of Conservation Districts).

"The National Wetlands Awards demonstrate the power of collaboration," said Bruce Knight, Chief, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. "No one person or group has the land base, knowledge, financial resources and people power to do it all; but put it together and wonderful things start to happen."

For more information on the National Wetlands Awards Program, the 2004 awardees, or for information on the awards presentation, please contact Erica Pencak at the Environmental Law Institute at (202) 939-3822 or wetlandsawards@eli.org. You can visit the NWA website at www.eli.org/nwa/nwaprogram.htm.

2004 National Wetlands Awards Winners

Education/Outreach

Sky Lewey, Texas

Ms. Lewey has raised public awareness about damage to wetlands by off-road vehicle recreation in the streambeds of the Nueces River in Southwest Texas. Her work to educate the public—especially children—about aquatic communities, connected watersheds and the value of riparian areas has included river field trips, games, interactive demonstrations and realistic scenarios. Ms. Lewey's outreach territory includes 23 watersheds, crosses three bioregions and encompasses 17,000 square miles of Southwest Texas.

Science Research

Francis Golet, Rhode Island

Dr. Golet has been a faculty member at the University of Rhode Island for more than 30 years. In 1979 he coauthored *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the U.S.* (Cowardin, et al.), which has been designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the standard wetland classification system nationwide. More recently, Dr. Golet advised the design of salt marsh restoration monitoring at Galilee Bird Sanctuary in Narragansett, R.I. in 1997 and completed a study of vegetative and faunal changes in the restored marsh in 2000.

Conservation and Restoration

Norman Brunswig, South Carolina

For 30 years, Mr. Brunswig has been engaged in the conservation of the Francis Beidler Forest (FBF) in the Four Holes Swamp watershed in South Carolina. The FBF contains the last virgin stands of cypress-tupelo swamp forest in the United States and is listed as a bird area of global significance by the American Bird Conservancy. The initial core tract of the FBF was 3,415 acres. He has worked to expand the wetlands and adjacent upland buffer to 11,500 acres. Another 900 acres are pending acquisition.

Landowner Stewardship

Jack Branning, Mississippi

By enrolling his entire Vicksburg, Mississippi farm in the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wetlands Reserve Program, Mr. Branning restored 3,498 acres to native bottomland hardwood wetlands. The restored land, which includes 721 acres of seasonal wetlands and 30 acres of semi-permanent wetlands, borders the eastern portion of the Delta National Forest, and includes the confluence of the False and Little Sunflower Rivers. His wetland restoration plan included the goal of maximizing habitat for migratory wetland birds and other wetland-dependent wildlife.

State, Tribal, and Local Program Development

Peg Bostwick, Michigan

As the §404 Federal Program Coordinator for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for the past 15 years, Ms. Bostwick has drafted Michigan wetland policies, worked to secure federal grant funds for wetland and coastal zone management projects, and ensured that research, science, and technology are integrated into the state program. She has also been instrumental in the development of a geographic information system (GIS) to support Michigan's wetland protection efforts, as well as internal and external training and education efforts.

Wetland Community Leader

Barbara Salzman, California

Ms. Salzman is President of the Marin Audubon Society and Director of Marin Bayland Advocates in Larkspur, California. She has initiated the protection of more than 870 acres of wetlands through negotiations with private landowners and developers, fundraising, support to volunteers, and education and outreach. She spearheaded efforts secure the purchase and preservation of the 632-acre Bahia site, stopping a housing development project by local referendum and raising \$15.8 million to purchase the site.

ELI is an independent, non-profit research and educational organization based in Washington, DC. The Institute serves the environmental profession in business, government, the private bar, public interest organizations, academia, and the press.

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